

National Strategy for Combating Antisemitism in Education (2022)



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The Abraham Global Peace Initiative

By

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Letter from Avi Benlolo

The seeds for making the world a better place start at home and in the classroom. Educators have the core responsibility of educating future generations of citizens. They are at the forefront of instilling values that build our national ethos and responsibility to advance values of human dignity, freedom, and democracy. Alongside our children's parents and guardians, educators have a unique advantage of creating caring and compassionate people who promote pluralism, co-existence, and respect for all.

Unfortunately, over the last year, the levels of antisemitic incidents in our classrooms across the country have been shocking: in one incident, students praised Adolf Hitler and downloaded Mein Kampf in the classroom; in another, they performed the Nazi salute to a Jewish teacher, and yet in another, they marched across their school's soccer field yelling "Heil Hitler". School Boards themselves and some teachers have sent mixed messages to both students and teachers about the Middle East Conflict, sometimes joining the anti-Israel parade, thereby allowing animosity against Jewish teachers and students to fester.

For our part, thanks to the exceptional efforts of our Director of Education, Dr Neil Orlowsky, we have spent the previous school year working with boards of education and teachers alike to reach a more sustainable environment by reducing the levels of antisemitism. We have conducted numerous workshops in schools and beyond, particularly in classrooms and schools infected with this pernicious hate. In building greater awareness and promoting respect, our Power of One exhibit has been completely booked throughout the year in schools and beyond.

This National Strategy Against Antisemitism brings forward a solution-based approach that can assist school boards, and educators prepare for the 2022-2023 school year. A national strategy requires more education, training, and research; it demands a safe environment and more security and protection for Jewish employees and students; it calls for effective enforcement of the law when necessary to confront hate crime and hate speech; it calls for the adoption of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance definition of Antisemitism, and it speaks to a need for engagement in combating hate on social media.

Our hope at The Abraham Global Peace Initiative is that the Board of Education accepts their unique role in combating Antisemitism and all forms of discrimination. As experts in Holocaust education and the fight against Antisemitism, we can deploy our resources to assist institutions with forming policy and action plans to combat this growing problem further. On behalf of the Board of Directors of AGPI, we thank and commend Dr Orlowsky for this insightful resource that will help protect our future and defend our past.

Sincerely,

Avi Abraham Benlolo
Founding Chairman and CEO

Executive Summary

In recent months, boards of education, individual schools, and several social justice educators have made headlines regarding antisemitism, comments made, or a lack of intervention given the rise in antisemitic incidents across the country. While national data on annual hate crimes identify Jews as the primary target of hate-motivated crimes, boards of education seem deaf to these numbers and blind to how antisemitic incidents in their buildings affect Jewish mental health and the well-being of students and staff. Over the last twelve months, AGPI has reached out to boards across Canada to express our concern with the rise and spread of anti-Jewish hate in their schools; the veiling of antisemitism behind claims of anti-Zionism not being "antisemitic" emerging and normalized through academic narratives, and attempts by other racialized and marginalized bodies gaslight the Jewish experience through EDI policies.

In so doing, AGPI has worked with boards across Canada to devise substantive measures for implementation to investigate incidents of anti-Jewish hate. During these meetings, we shared best practices to foster safe, equitable, and inclusive learning and working environments for all students and staff. This paper highlights our concerns and references pertinent provincial legislation. So too, this paper provides eight steps that boards of education can adopt and infuse into their start-up for the 2022-2023 school year, their annual review process, and their revision of EDI policies.

While change is slow and conversations around race are uncomfortable, AGPI urges boards of education and educational stakeholders to reflect on what equity and inclusivity mean and whether programs and policies are serving all students' interests equally.

Neil Orłowsky, MEd., PhD.
Director of Education

Introduction

In the wake of the intractable conflicts between Israel and radical-Islamic fundamentalist groups in Lebanon and the Palestinian territories (e.g., Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad [PIJ], the Popular Front of the Liberation of Palestine [PFLP], Hezbollah, etc.), academic institutions across Canada saw a rise in the spread of anti-Jewish hate on campuses and over social media. Moreover, the veiling of antisemitism behind claims of anti-Zionism not being "antisemitic" emerged in academic narratives as attempts to have other racialized and marginalized bodies define what is and is not antisemitism to the Jewish community (i.e., gaslighting). In practice, academia has seemingly normalized or provided spaces for student clubs and unions to silence, intimidate, or distort Jewish narratives and the centring of Jewish experiences, all under the guise of academic freedom and under the umbrella of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusivity (EDI).

Over the last year, AGPI has reached out to Boards of Education, provincial Ministry's of Education, and Colleges and Universities across Canada to express our concerns about the rise in anti-Jewish hate in all levels of academics (elementary and secondary schools, and on colleges and university campuses). Throughout the correspondence process, AGPI has worked with boards across Canada to understand which substantive measures are currently being used to investigate incidents of anti-Jewish hate and what practices they have in place that create safe, equitable, and inclusive learning and working spaces for all students and staff.

However, over the last twelve months, students and staff across Canada have reported or been party to several antisemitic incidents in their classrooms, hallways, stairwells, and online. While antisemitism and acts thereof go beyond physical threats, AGPI recognizes the impact said incidents have on one's emotional and mental health and well-being through explicit and implicit acts of hate. Furthermore, while media outlets label these incidents as "isolated" events or endemic solely to one board or one university, other institutions across Canada have proven not to be immune to the rise in anti-Jewish hate.

Here, the term anti-Jewish hate is used as an umbrella term and is teased out by AGPI Director of Education, Dr Neil Orłowsky, to contain and centre discrimination, marginalization, and othering of Jews, their community, and their allies as meaning or referring to:

Attitudes, beliefs, discrimination, distortion, prejudice, and stereotypes that are directed at Jews, the Jewish community, or allies to the Jewish community and are rooted in their unique history and experiences of antisemitism, anti-Zionism, and the Holocaust and its legacy. Anti-Jewish hate is entrenched in academic institutions, society, and political policies and practices to the extent that anti-Jewish hate is either functionally normalized or their racialization and marginalization, are negated or rendered invisible within conversations of ethnicity, oppression, and discrimination. anti-Jewish hate manifests in the social, economic, or political marginalization through attempts to (1) delegitimize the state of Israel or Jewish claims of indigeneity with the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region; (2) demonize the state of Israel and Jewish claims of indigeneity within the MENA region using antisemitic tropes, distortion, bias, and all false narratives, and by, (3) holding Israel or the Jewish people to a double standard - namely through Boycott, Divestment and Sanction Campaigns (BDS), and claims Jewish voices are contributing to anti-Palestinian racism (Orłowsky, 2022).

Given the discomfort associated with defining and discussing race, AGPI is glad that many boards across Canada have been leaning in to create safe and inclusive spaces for the different needs of the Jewish communities and for their students and families to self-identify without fear of discrimination. In so doing, this report documents AGPI's concerns for the upcoming academic year and is motivated by the spirit of Culturally Responsive and Relevant Pedagogies, the pursuit of anti-Oppressive Frameworks, and the need to create more robust, inclusive learning opportunities for all students to understand each other better.

In so going, AGPI is concerned about anti-Jewish hate and antisemitism in schools, and the safety of Jewish students, staff, and allies to the Jewish community who experience or feel unsafe given the rise in anti-Jewish hate and antisemitism on school grounds and within formal and informal academic spaces.

Political Background

The pursuit of antisemitism legislation has been an uphill battle across the Canadian landscape. While Ontario has led the way in its attempts to dismantle hate through formal legislation, partisan politics, and other influences, including lobby groups, have made this work challenging.

In 2016, Ontario proposed "Bill 202 – Standing Up Against Antisemitism in Ontario Act", which calls the international Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement "one of the main vehicles for spreading antisemitism and the delegitimization of Israel globally." Ontario noted that the BDS movement is increasingly promoted within academia (school, college, and university) campuses in Ontario. The BDS movement violates the principle of academic freedom and fosters a climate of anti-Jewish and anti-Israel speech leading to intimidation and violence on campuses. While Bill 202 guides Ontario's approach, it has come under scrutiny when government-funded organizations, namely schools, colleges, and universities, fail to prevent BDS events from occurring in or within academic spaces.

In 2018, the York Region District School Board (YRDSB) Equity and Inclusivity Advisory Committee "Antisemitism Subcommittee" put forth three recommendations that spoke to:

1. Holocaust Education and Resources.
2. The identification of significant faith days and cultural celebrations.
3. The recognition between anti-Zionism and antisemitism under the umbrella of Israel, fear of identifying and the new antisemitism.

In so doing, these recommendation, aligning with Bill 202, recognized, and stated that the BDS movement contributes to anti-Jewish hate, antisemitism, and feelings of outing or otherness within board sites. While the YRDSB took these three recommendations into consideration, four years since the recommendations were presented, the board, in a similar fashion to others across Canada, has been slow to act on them, prioritizing other affinity groups mandates (anti-Black racism, anti-indigenous racism, 2S-LGBTQ+ inclusion) at the expense of growing concerns from Jewish community and increased reported incidents of antisemitism.

In 2019, Conservative Minister of Education, MPP Stephen Lecce tweeted, "Free speech is one thing, but anti-Semitism violently targeting Jewish students is indefensible & unacceptable." One year later, he, alongside Conservative MPP Robin Martin and MPP Stan Cho, announced investments and resources to combat rising antisemitism in schools and communities across Canada and the world. Incidents of board-wide antisemitism continued to rise.

In 2020, Ontario proposed "Bill 168 – Combating Antisemitism Act", co-sponsored by Conservative MPPs Robin Martin and MPP Will Bouma, which required the Government of Ontario to be guided by the working definition of antisemitism and the list of illustrative examples of it, adopted by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) plenary on May 26, 2016, when it interprets Acts, Regulations and Policies designed to protect Ontarians from discrimination and hate amounting to anti-Jewish racism and antisemitism. Given the previously mentioned comment about Bill 202 not being applied in schools through their allowance of spaces for BDS campaigns, AGPI Director of Education has pressed some of the 72 boards of education in Ontario as to why schools across this province and others in Canada not followed suit in adopting the IHRA working definition of antisemitism even as a guide in their creation of and implementation of anti-racism policies, EDI training, and restorative practices? Incidents of board-wide antisemitism continued to rise.

In 2021, Ontario partnered with Jewish advocacy groups to fight hate and discrimination by adopting the "Ontario Act to Combat Antisemitism in Schools". In so doing, the province allocated \$327,000 to support two summer learning programs. While outside organizations have been invited into schools to provide training to senior staff and teachers, concerns grow that these programs are being provided to the wrong cohorts, wrong educators, or during inconvenient times not conducive to student and school timetables (e.g., registration opened voluntarily and often after working hours). While senior staff have attended these programs, teachers who are on the front lines in dealing with or reporting incidents of antisemitism have stated to AGPI that learning had at the board level is not trickling down to the schools in a manner that is authentic – claiming boards are engaging in performative actions and virtue signalling as opposed to engaging in meaningful dialogue that enacts needed change.

Given the spirit of both Bill 168 and Bill 202, the [Ontario Human Rights Commission](#) (OHRC) statement, and the [Federal Government's statement](#) and push to combat and dismantle antisemitism following the [Malmo Conference](#), AGPI believes that school boards, colleges and universities who accept provincial funds (in any capacity) should adhere to the principles our government is guided by, namely combating antisemitism and dismantling BDS campaigns the same way that funding is allocated based on performance in creating programs as a response to labour market needs.

Concerns

The environment for Jewish students and staff in schools has been fraught with anti-Jewish hate manifested in antisemitic and anti-Zionist bias. Statistics on reported hate crime incidents published by the [Toronto Police Services](#) and their regional partners note that hate-motivated crimes against the Jewish community (individuals, businesses, and non-Jewish allies to the community) have repeatedly topped annual reports. However, the Jewish population remains the lowest per capita, per jurisdiction. Further troubling is the failure to recognize the intersectionality of the Jewish community beyond an ashkenormative lens (e.g., Mizrahi, Sephardic, etc.), who experience racism based on skin tone and religion and are therefore at double the risk compared to their Ashkenazi neighbours.

While [Statistics Canada](#) has recently published their 2021 data on hate-motivated crimes, AGPI is troubled by organizations and their representatives who have actively sought to discredit the data by questioning its methodology and sample size, as well as the annual trend and comparison to previous years. Unfortunately, these data sets fail to address instances of anti-Jewish hate (including specific antisemitism, anti-Zionist intimidation, bullying, or a lack of reporting by students and parents) due to a fear of retaliation or a belief from the Jewish community that boards of education will turn a blind eye. Given that, this paper proves even more necessary for boards of education to recognize and for teachers and students at all levels to be prepared with the knowledge to deal with the anti-Jewish hate they will undoubtedly encounter.

As boards and academic stakeholders grapple with and devise policies to combat racism in schools, it is imperative that they (boards and their representatives) understand that the hate, racism, intolerance, prejudice, and discrimination that one ethnocultural group might receive may not be the same, nor will it manifest the same compared to other ethnocultural groups. So too, there is a failure to understand the roots of distinct 'isms and how they uniquely manifest in both monocultural and mixed societies. Anti-Jewish hate and antisemitism are not the same as anti-Black racism and vice versa, nor are they rooted in the same way as Islamophobia, anti-Asian racism, or anti-Indigenous racism. Each form of hate is unique and must be understood and addressed. While boards of education attempt to model equity and inclusivity throughout their programs, board action remains performative. Boards allegedly demand an environment where all students, staff, parents, and their community feel valued and have a sense of belonging, seemingly failing to take substantive action when Jews are outed, harassed, and forced to remain in unhealthy learning and working environments.

So too, outing is not always explicit, and when it is, it rarely occurs within formal classrooms with educators present. Given that, AGPI notes that,

- Boards are failing to address and dismantle hallway hate, attention-seeking students who shout antisemitic tropes like "Heil Hitler" in class (with or without an educator present), or vandalize the school with Nazi sloganeering, swastikas and calls to (even implicitly) kill Jews? When boards talk about antisemitism, APCI questions what definition they are using, and to whom are they turning to define antisemitism?

- Boards are failing to address anti-Jewish hate by questioning, failing to adopt, and giving legitimacy to left-wing talking points around the [IHRA's](#) working definition. AGPI asks why Jews (as a collective body) seemingly cannot define the hate they receive ([Ontario Bill 168 – Combating Antisemitism Act](#)) on their terms.
- Boards are failing to monitor, sustainably and authentically, anti-Jewish hate within their schools. More troubling is that incidents of antisemitism and anti-Jewish hatred are going un(der)reported either by parents and students out of fear of retaliation or by the schools due to difficulty establishing motive from implicit acts of antisemitic bullying or anti-Jewish hate. Furthermore, while systems are in place to document similar instances, boards repeatedly failed to demonstrate their understanding of what antisemitic tropes and dog whistles have been utilized, tolerated, and destigmatized as a form of anti-Jewish normalization. In 2021, the Toronto District School Board called for an understanding of alternative narratives and histories instead of intersecting narratives. While these comments may not have intentionally been nefarious, the idea of an "alternative" led to further questions about Israel's right to land, sovereignty and security, and Jewish self-determination in the MENA region.
- Through a lack of demonstration, boards have failed to understand the implications of sloganeering "Free Palestine" or "From River to Sea" and its connection to [The Covenant of the Hamas](#). By allowing such sloganeering within school environments, that doctrine of Hamas is given legitimacy. Boards must be reminded that Hamas is a [currently listed terrorist entity](#) according to Canada's [Anti-Terrorism Act](#).
- Boards have failed to recognize the connection between and the ongoing debate over anti-Zionism and antisemitism, and in said failure, have been slow to act on disciplining educators who are planting the roots of and peddling conspiracy theories and antisemitic tropes in school.
- While speaking about their support of transformative and critical education, boards of education have demonstrated their hypocrisy by allowing school-based or student-run (with teacher support) BDS campaigns under the umbrella of social justice education ([Ontario Bill 202 – Standing Up Against Anti-Semitism Act](#)).
- Schools, teachers, and students have failed to critically analyze or interrogate media and geopolitical bias. If done, this lens remains disconnected from their school-based support of anti-Zionist social justice campaigns that perpetuate a veiled antisemitic agenda.
- Boards failed to demonstrate how fermenting bias posed by radical "Jewish" organizations are perpetuating nuanced or veiled racism by (a) questioning or the erasure of Jewish indigeneity from the MENA region, (b) intervening in practices that utilize their materials, and (c) provide a revisionist history and acceptance of distorted facts.

Given that some teachers have acknowledged feeling ill-equipped with their level of knowledge around Holocaust education, some boards have attempted to provide voluntary training to teachers around the Holocaust, anti-Jewish hate, and its manifestations as being rooted in more than just

the Holocaust. However, given this, many antisemitic tropes used in formal and informal educational spaces continue to remain underreported due to a lack of understanding of how specific incidents are antisemitic (disconnected from the Holocaust). One teacher noted that a (Jewish) student was asked by another to see her horns. On a different occasion, another teacher was consoling a crying (Jewish) student because the kids kept calling her a vampire and running away from her scream that she will drink their blood. In both cases, the teachers admitted that they were unaware of the trope that Jews had horns or that Jews drink blood. If teachers cannot recognize the trope, what will happen next?

There is no doubt that education is political. Still, in efforts to separate politics from education and create a space for active dialogue, AGPI has offered to meet with and co-create sustainable programs that create safe and inclusive spaces for all students.

Next Steps

In 2021, TDSB superintendents noted, "Human rights work is often complex and includes competing rights. Our position has and always will be to support our students in being able to tell their stories and understand conflicting experiences of oppression. We will work with staff and students to ensure they understand these multiple meanings and ensure hate is not part of the discussion." In the spirit of these words, AGPI notes that hate is not endemic to one group, but combating it needs to start with an understanding that each form of hate is unique to the community receiving it. Given reported hate-crime data published by Statistics Canada and similar publications by nationwide police services, Jews remain the most targeted ethnocultural or religious group for hate crimes in Canada. As an organization, AGPI understands that while parliamentary partnerships are imperative for changes today, we also recognize the importance of education and the role educators play in shaping a culture of tolerance, dialogue, and peace. The role academia plays is essential to future leadership and learning.

As schools work to de-stream courses and boards look for innovative ways to increase representation and ensure equal opportunities for their most vulnerable students, including those from marginalized and racialized communities, each group's experiences must be uniquely understood. Given the concerns highlighted previously, AGPI offers the following next steps that, if implemented in conjunction with current EDI policies, will ease growing tensions between Jewish staff and students, other racialized and marginalized bodies, and where each fits within board-wide EDI foci.

In recognizing that it is the duty of every employer in Canada to ensure the safety of their employees, and in creating spaces where Jewish students, staff, and allies feel safe and protected, we call on all boards of education across Canada to:

1. Pressure and work with the Ministry of Education, respective unions, and professional councils (e.g., OCT, OPC, OTF, etc.) to develop curricular materials and guidelines that deal with sensitive topics like anti-Jewish hate (e.g., antisemitism, anti-Zionism, etc.).

2. Create a professional advisory on antisemitism that guides teachers on how to prevent them from using their positions for grooming students for political advancements and, in turn, political indoctrination.
3. Develop system and site guidelines for dealing with teacher/student-guided protests and activism while dealing with charter rights and human rights in line with professional council advisories.
4. Accept IHRA's working definition of antisemitism as a lens in developing equity policies, programs, and practices, and provide system-wide training for teachers and school staff in recognizing, addressing, and dismantling anti-Jewish hate.
5. Refuse to support or provide space (during or after school hours) to any BDS programs on school property, and label them appropriately as a double standard movement that "promotes a climate of anti-Jewish and anti-Israeli speech leading to intimidation and violence".
6. Install a centrally placed administrator to oversee and investigate all reports of all anti-Jewish hate and incidents across their respective board of education. In this capacity, the administrator will work with a network of educators to support Jewish learners and with community-based advocacy groups to co-create student-centric programming that reduces the marginalization of Jewish students and dismantles anti-Jewish hate in all its forms.
7. Implement a litmus test that gauges how board produced content:
 - a. Delegitimizes the State of Israel or Jewish claims of indigeneity.
 - b. Demonises the State of Israel and Jewish claims of indigeneity using antisemitic tropes, distortion, bias, or false narratives.
 - c. Holds Israel and the Jewish people to a double standard – namely through BDS campaigns and claims Jewish voices are contributing to anti-Palestinian racism.
8. Educates students and holds staff accountable for how they (through what topics and materials) teach about religious persecution, the systematic murder of Jews throughout history (pre-, during, and post-Holocaust), and how misinformation campaigns, sloganeering, and BDS can metastasize into human rights violations, the destruction of democratic norms, even genocide.

There is no doubt that data might not document every antisemitic incident or act of anti-Jewish hate. Still, parents and students across Canada have repeatedly voiced concerns to AGPI that they feel marginalized and unsafe identifying as Jewish or having others know they are Jewish within public schools across the country. Moreover, AGPI continues to document and report school-based incidents of erasure of the Jewish identity from anti-racism discussions. Many educators have noted that colleagues have either allowed or shared anti-Zionist sentiments to ferment anti-Jewish hate. Furthermore, while concerns are shared with respective unions and governing bodies, teachers have admitted to us they fear that with more unions adopting BDS campaigns and social

justice agendas that centre the Palestinian struggle around alleged Jewish or Israeli atrocities, they (the Jewish staff) feel silenced and unsupported.

In previous correspondence with various boards in Ontario, AGPI offered an eight-point reflective consideration tool that leaders and educators may use in positioning their work within EDI, anti-racism education, culturally responsive pedagogies, and anti-oppressive frameworks. Given the conversations that ensued, we request that further to the above eight points, boards reflect on:

1. How they strongly and critically articulate the case for the duality of narratives, examine the interconnectivity of histories, and situated diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts as essential to the mission of their EDI work and how this implementation leads to continued excellence for all students, from all pathways.
2. How (do) they establish(ed) or design(at) an administrative role tasked with overseeing, critiquing, or leading system-wide efforts to introduce or strategically advance EDI and anti-racist organizational change within their organizational structure (system and site-wide)?
3. How they delegated central and decentralized accountabilities for advancing EDI and anti-racism (inclusive of an anti-Jewish hate lens) to critical portfolios across the board to centre, champion and foster accountability.
4. How they provide a matrix for sustainable implementation and accountability for successful outcomes guided by board policies, procedures and implementation tools that integrate EDI, anti-racism and inclusive excellence principles and practices into schools and school-based activities.
5. What programs are monitored, and how are system-wide and site-based climate reviews conducted. What data has been collected, collated, and analyzed to gauge successes, failures, and next steps? What mitigating circumstances are considered, and how is data used to drive short-term and long-term decision-making?
6. How they incorporate mechanisms for regular consultation with and engage with communities most affected by the systemic inequalities, including racialized community members, stakeholders, and representatives.

Given the paper's discussion on political background, concerns, and next steps, AGPI is interested in understanding what learning is expected before and post-reported incidents. What matrix is in place to ensure that restorative justice is sustainable and is in the best interest of all parties involved as well as their communities? Moreover, this paper serves as a guide for boards to consider the background that has been provided to them based on hate-motivated incidents and what may have been missed, consciously omitted, or framed to garner political or community support in one way or another. Are schools used as springboards for political indoctrination? Are students the recipients of biased content? How critical is the board in the process, and are educators using their positions to deliver programs that foster an imperative, interrogative, and reflective lens of inquiry?

In conversation with Jewish educators, students, and their families, AGPI has heard time and again, from coast to coast, that they are facing more antisemitism and hate in education than anyone previously thought. Boards of education need to ensure that every Jewish student feels safe and empowered to express their Jewish values and whole selves in the classroom, halls, and every aspect of academic life. Peace in the Middle East will not be made in a school in Canada but rather brokered through dialogue which respects the unique identities, experiences, and intersecting histories that make the Middle East beautiful. Jewish students, like all students, racialized or not, deserve to learn and live in peace, without fear of being outed, othered, or discriminated against. As an international organization founded on advancing human rights and fundamental freedom for all, AGPI is ready and willing to provide support, guidance, and expertise to all boards.

Conclusions

Peace is not a zero-sum game where we need to choose sides. Peacebuilding, Peacemaking, and Peacekeeping are all equally founded on creating spaces for dialogue, and while parties may not agree, it works to create a space where we listen. It is the responsibility of everyone in education to create safe and inclusive spaces for everyone and ensure those spaces both respect and are respectful to each other.

This paper intended to highlight concerns and amplify the following steps AGPI would like to see considered in each board of education's annual review and revision of their EDI policies. Given this, AGPI offers to co-create sustainable and authentic programs that aid in implementing the next steps, help monitor their success, and devise possible solutions for infusion into other equity work being conducted within the boards. There is no doubt that students and staff are divided on interconnecting and intersecting histories within the Middle East, and listening to chants, cries, and sloganeering, voices and experiences are feeling veiled, negated or othered. While students are chanting "Free Palestine" in the halls and on the field, other students think their history and their experiences are consciously silenced. The issue as we see it:

1. At whose or at what expense are voices silenced?
2. How do we create an environment where we can be critical while respectfully walking the talk?

Equity work is complex, and as educators, we are driven to create safe and inclusive environments to celebrate diversity in efforts to decolonize our institutions.

3. While boards of education have shifted, what actionable measures are authentically and sustainably implemented to ensure success and what structures have been put in place to monitor success and highlight further needs?

For inclusivity to be successful, boards of education, schools, educators, and the community need to build relationships founded on and based on an understanding of shared experiences, advocacy, a sense of identity, and transparency. When one group's identity, experiences, or history is

amplified over another, the systems and those the board set out to help are hindered. If a board, a school, or a classroom is only safe for some, it is safe for none.

Glossary

Antisemitism: The latent or overt hostility or hatred directed towards, or discrimination against, individual Jewish people or the Jewish people for reasons connected to their religion, ethnicity, and their cultural, historical, intellectual, and religious heritage.

Anti-Asian Racism: The historical and ongoing discrimination, negative stereotyping, and injustice experienced by peoples of Asian heritage based on others' assumptions about their ethnicity and nationality. People of Asian origin are subjected to specific overt and subtle racist tropes and stereotypes at individual and systemic levels, which lead to their ongoing social, economic, political, and cultural marginalization, disadvantage, and unequal treatment. The term Asian encompasses a wide range of identities that the very term Asian can obscure. While all may experience being "otherized," specific experiences of anti-Asian Racism vary. Some are constantly perceived as a threat; some face gendered exoticification and violence, some are more likely to be subjected to online hate and racist portrayals in the media, while others face Islamophobia and other forms of religious-based discrimination.

Anti-Black Racism: The prejudice, attitudes, beliefs, stereotyping, and discrimination that is directed at people of African descent and is rooted in their unique history and experience of enslavement and its legacy. Anti-Black racism is deeply entrenched in Canadian institutions, policies, and practices, to the extent that anti-Black racism is either functionally normalized or rendered invisible to the larger White society. Anti-Black racism is manifest in the current social, economic, and political marginalization of African Canadians, which includes unequal opportunities, lower socio-economic status, higher unemployment, significant poverty rates and overrepresentation in the criminal justice system.

Anti-Indigenous Racism: The ongoing race-based discrimination, negative stereotyping, and injustice experienced by Indigenous Peoples within Canada. It includes ideas and practices that establish, maintain, and perpetuate power imbalances, systemic barriers, and inequitable outcomes that stem from the legacy of colonial policies and procedures in Canada. Systemic anti-Indigenous Racism is evident in discriminatory federal policies such as the Indian Act and the residential school system. It is also manifest in the overrepresentation of Indigenous peoples in provincial criminal justice and child welfare systems and inequitable outcomes in education, well-being, and health. Individual lived experiences of anti-Indigenous Racism can be seen in the rise in acts of hostility and violence directed at Indigenous people.

Anti-Jewish Hate: Attitudes, beliefs, discrimination, distortion, prejudice, and stereotypes that are directed at Jews, the Jewish community, or allies to the Jewish community and are rooted in their unique history and experiences of antisemitism, anti-Zionism, and the Holocaust and its legacy. Anti-Jewish hate is entrenched in academic institutions, society, and political policies and practices to the extent that anti-Jewish hate is either functionally normalized or their racialization

and marginalization, are negated or rendered invisible within conversations of ethnicity, oppression, and discrimination. Anti-Jewish hate manifests in the social, economic, or political marginalization through attempts to:

1. Delegitimize the state of Israel or Jewish claims of indigeneity with the Middle East and North Africa – MENA region.
2. Demonize the state of Israel and Jewish claims of indigeneity with the MENA region using antisemitic tropes, distortion, bias, and all false narratives.
3. Holding Israel or the Jewish people to a double standard - namely through Boycott, Divestment and Sanction Campaigns, and claims Jewish voices are contributing to anti-Palestinian Racism.

Anti-Oppressive: Strategies, theories, and actions that challenge social and historical inequalities/injustices that have become part of our systems and institutions and allow certain groups to dominate over others.

Anti-Racism: A process, a systematic method of analysis, and a proactive course of action rooted in recognizing the existence of Racism, including systemic Racism. Anti-racism actively seeks to identify, prevent, and mitigate racially inequitable outcomes and power imbalances between groups and change the structures that sustain inequities.

Anti-Zionism: Anti-Zionism opposes Zionism, the movement for the self-determination and statehood of the Jewish people in their ancestral homeland, the land of Israel. Anti-Zionism is distinct from criticism of the policies or actions of the government of Israel, or critiques of specific guidelines of the pre-state Zionist movement, in that it attacks the foundational legitimacy of Jewish statehood. Anti-Zionism is often expressed, explicitly or implicitly, in the rejection of Jewish nationhood and the right to self-determination, the vilification of individuals and groups associated with Zionism, and the downplaying or negation of the historical and spiritual Jewish connection to the land of Israel.

Ashkenormative: Refers to a form of Eurocentrism within Ashkenazi Jewish culture that confers privilege on Ashkenazi Jews relative to Jews of Sephardi, Mizrahi, and other non-Ashkenazi backgrounds, as well as to the assumption that Ashkenazi culture is the default Jewish culture. Ashkenormativity often overlaps with white privilege, as many Ashkenazi Jews are white. Still, the terms are not synonymous as Ashkenazi Jews of colour do not benefit from white privilege. Some non-Ashkenazi Jews, such as white Sephardi or Mizrahi Jews, may benefit from white privilege.

Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS): A Palestinian-led movement promoting boycotts, divestments, and economic sanctions against Israel. Its objective is to pressure Israel to meet what the BDS movement describes as Israel's obligations under international law, defined as withdrawal from the alleged occupied territories, removal of the separation barrier in the West Bank, full equality for Arab-Palestinian citizens of Israel, and "respecting, protecting, and promoting the rights of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes and properties."

Culturally Responsive and Relevant Pedagogies (CRRP): A pedagogy grounded in teachers' practice of cultural competence or skill at teaching in a cross-cultural or multicultural setting. Teachers using this method encourage students to relate course content to their cultural context.

Equity: Refers to fairness and justice and is distinguished from equality: Whereas equality means providing the same to all, equity means recognizing that we do not all start from the same place and must acknowledge and adjust imbalances.

Gaslighting: A colloquialism loosely defined as making someone question their reality.

Hamas: A radical Islamist-nationalist terrorist organization that emerged from the Palestinian branch of the Muslim Brotherhood in 1987. It uses political and violent means to pursue its goal of establishing an Islamic Palestinian state in Israel.

Hezbollah: A radical Shia group ideologically inspired by the Iranian revolution. Its goals are the liberation of Jerusalem, the destruction of Israel, and, ultimately, the establishment of a revolutionary Shia Islamic state in Lebanon, modelled after Iran.

Inclusion: Refers to the inclusive processes, policies, services, programs, and practices which are accessible to and useable by as many people as possible, regardless of race, ethnic origin, gender, age, disability, language, etc. Everyone can enjoy a sense of trust, belonging and involvement, and everyone is encouraged to contribute and participate fully. An inclusive environment is open, safe, equitable and respectful.

Intersectionality: Intersectionality is how people's lives are shaped by their multiple and overlapping identities and social locations, which, together, can produce a unique and distinct experience for that individual or group, for example, creating additional barriers, and opportunities, or power imbalances. An intersectional analysis enables a better understanding of the impacts of any systemic barrier by considering how that barrier may be interacting with other related factors.

Islamophobia: A form of racism, stereotypes, prejudice, fear, or acts of hostility directed towards individual Muslims or followers of Islam in general. In addition to individual acts of intolerance and racial profiling, Islamophobia can lead to viewing and treating Muslims as a more significant security threat on an institutional, systemic, and societal level.

Marginalization: Marginalization is a long-term, structural process of systemic discrimination that creates a class of disadvantaged minorities. Marginalized groups become permanently confined to the fringes of society. Their status is perpetuated through various dimensions of exclusion, particularly in the labour market, from full and meaningful social participation.

Mizrahi: Jews who lived in North Africa and the Middle East until the mid-20th century and whose ancestors did not previously reside in Europe.

Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ): One of the most violent Palestinian terrorist groups. The PIJ maintains that armed struggle by the Palestinian people, in tandem with active support from the

Arab and Muslim worlds, is the only viable strategy for achieving its objectives – the destruction of Israel and the complete liberation of Palestine.

Popular Front of the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP): The goals of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) are the destruction of the State of Israel and the establishment of a communist government in Palestine.

Race: A term used to classify people based principally on physical traits (phenotypes) such as skin colour. Racial categories are not based on science or biology but on differences that society has created (i.e., "socially constructed"), with significant consequences for people's lives.

Racialization: A process of delineating group boundaries (races) and allocation of persons within those boundaries by primary reference to (supposedly) inherent or biological (usually phenotypical) characteristics. In this process, societies construct races as 'real,' different, and unequal in ways that matter to economic, political, and social life.

Racism: Includes ideas or practices that establish, maintain, or perpetuate one group's racial superiority or dominance over another.

Religion: Any religious denomination, group, sect, or other religiously defined community or system of belief or spiritual faith practices.

Stereotypes: Qualities ascribed to individuals or groups based on misconceptions, false generalizations, or oversimplifications that potentially result in stigmatization. A race-based stereotype is a quality ascribed to individuals/groups related to race. Stereotypes can perpetuate Racism and racial discrimination and give rise to racial inequalities.

Systemic Racism: Consists of organizational culture, policies, directives, practices, or procedures that exclude, displace, or marginalize some racialized groups or create unfair barriers to access valuable benefits and opportunities. This is often the result of institutional biases in organizational culture, policies, directives, practices, and procedures that may appear neutral but have the effect of privileging some groups and disadvantaging others.

Sephardic: Member or descendant of the Jews who lived in Spain and Portugal from at least the later centuries of the Roman Empire until their persecution and mass expulsion from those countries in the last decades of the 15th century.